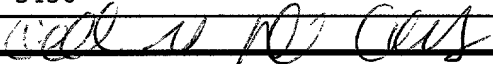
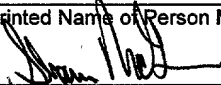


UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL		Attorney Docket No.	2000-0072	Total Pages	33
See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.		First Named Inventor or Application Identifier			
		Sheryl Leigh Woodward			
		Express Mail Label No.	EL354901947US		
APPLICATION ELEMENTS		ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents Box Patent Application Washington, D.C. 20231			
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fee Transmittal Form (submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)		5. <input type="checkbox"/> Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)			
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification [Total Pages 15] (preferred arrangement set forth below)		6. <input type="checkbox"/> Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary)			
- Descriptive title of invention		a. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Readable Copy			
- Cross References to Related Applications		b. <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)			
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R&D		c. <input type="checkbox"/> Statement verifying identity of above copies			
- Reference to Microfiche Appendix					
- Background of the Invention					
- Brief Summary of the Invention					
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)					
- Detailed Description					
- Claim(s)					
- Abstract of the Disclosure					
3. <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) [Total Sheets 3]					
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 3]					
a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly executed (original or copy)					
b. <input type="checkbox"/> Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional with Box 15 completed) [Note Box 15 below]					
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		ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS			
		7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))			
		8. <input type="checkbox"/> 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney			
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		11. <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Amendment			
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15. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment: <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Divisional <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior Application No: Prior application information: Examiner: Group/Art Unit: For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.					
16. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS					
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Number or Bar Code Label (Insert Customer No. or Attach bar code label here) or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence address below					
NAME	Samuel H. Dworetzky				
ADDRESS	AT&T CORP. P.O. Box 4110				
CITY	Middletown	STATE	New Jersey	ZIP CODE	07748-4110
COUNTRY	United States of America			FAX	732-368-6932
17. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, ATTORNEY, OR AGENT REQUIRED					
NAME	Cedric G DeLaCruz			Reg. #	36498
TELEPHONE	908-221-5430				
SIGNATURE				DATE	11/01/2000
"Express Mail" Mailing Label Number EL354901947US Date of Deposit 11/01/2000					
I hereby certify that this application is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington D.C. , 20231					
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TRANSMITTAL

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**TOTAL AMOUNT
OF PAYMENT** \$830**Complete if Known**

Application Number	
Filing Date	
First Named Inventor	Sheryl Leigh Woodward
Examiner Name	
Group/Art Unit	
Attorney Docket No.	2000-0072

METHOD OF PAYMENT (check one)

1. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayments to:

Deposit Account Number 01-2745
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☒ Charge Any Additional Fee Required Under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 ☐ Charge the Issue Fee Set in 37 CFR 1.18 at the Mailing Date of the Notice of Allowance

FEE CALCULATION**1. FILING FEE**

Large Fee Code	Entity Fee(\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
101	710	Utility(37CFR 1.53(b)) / CPA(37CFR 1.53(d)) Filing Fee	710
106	320	Design Filing Fee	
108	710	Reissue Filing Fee	
144	150	Provisional Filing Fee	

SUBTOTAL (1) 710**2. CLAIMS**

☐ Filing Under 37CFR 1.53 (b)
☐ CPA Under 37CFR 1.53 (d)
☐ Amendment

Extra Claims		Fee from below	Fee Paid
Total 18	- 20 =	0	0
Ind 4	- 3 =	1	80
Multiple Dependent Claims			0

Large Fee Code	Entity Fee(\$)	Fee Description
103	18	Claims in excess of 20
102	80	Independent Claims in excess of 3
104	270	Multiple Dependent Claims
109	80	Reissue independent claims over original patent
110	18	Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) 80**FEE CALCULATION (continued)****3. ADDITIONAL FEES**

Large Fee Code	Entity Fee(\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
105	130	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	
127	50	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	
139	130	Non-English specification	
147	2520	For filing a request for reexamination	
112*	920	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	
113*	1840	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
115	110	Extension for reply within first month	
116	390	Extension for reply within second month	
117	890	Extension for reply within third month	
118	1390	Extension for reply within fourth month	
128	1890	Extension for reply within fifth month	
119	310	Notice of Appeal	
120	310	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	
121	270	Request for oral hearing	
138	1510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	
140	110	Petition to revive - unavoidable	
141	1240	Petition to revive - unintentional	
142	1240	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	
143	440	Design issue fee	
122	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	
123	50	Petitions related to provisional applications	
126	240	Submission of Information Disclosure Statement	
581	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	40
146	710	Filing a submission after final rejection(37 CFR 1.129(a))	
149	710	For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR 1.129(b))	

Other fee (specify)

Other fee (specify)

* Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBTOTAL(3) 40**SUBMITTED BY**

Typed or Printed Name Cedric G DeLaCruz

Complete (if applicable)

Reg. Number 36498

Signature

Date

11/01/2000

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TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to utilizing a robust modulation format for transmitting information on a cable television system including a fiber-optic access system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Background

Historically, cable television (CATV) infrastructure has been optimized for providing broadcast services, such as broadcast television. Conventional CATV infrastructure includes hybrid-fiber coaxial (HFC) architecture that provides low cost distribution of broadcast services.

CATV providers, no longer offering only broadcast television, now offer a wide range of services, with new broadband services constantly being introduced. These new services demand more Mbps/user, and eventually the demand may exceed network capacity.

As the price of optical components drops and network demand increases, HFC architectures may cease to be the most efficient infrastructure for delivering broadband services to the home. It is well known that fiber-optic access systems (i.e., systems that bring fiber closer to the home than conventional HFC architecture, such as fiber-to-the-home (FTTH), fiber-to-the-curb (FTTC) and the like) can have far greater capacity than HFC architectures. However, to displace conventional HFC systems, a new architecture including fiber-optic access systems is needed for delivering broadband services.

Migration to an architecture including a fiber-optic access system cannot be accomplished overnight. Thus, for a prolonged period, CATV infrastructure will include both fiber-optic access systems and HFC architecture. Therefore, there is a need for a CATV infrastructure employing fiber-optic access systems and HFC distribution plants that share a primary hub and other equipment.

Additionally, conventional HFC architectures generally utilize a modulation format having a high signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) that is required for broadcast

transmissions. For example, traditional, analog, broadcast-television signals employ amplitude modulation vestigial sideband (AM-VSB), which requires a very high carrier-to-noise ratio (CNR), and traditional HFC architectures have been designed to support this.

Also, because coaxial cable has limited bandwidth, bandwidth efficient modulation formats are used. For example, downstream digital signals (e.g., digital video or data) typically employ quadrature-amplitude-modulation (QAM), such as 64-QAM or 256-QAM, with either 6 or 8 bits per symbol. Channels are generally separated by 6 MHz, and consequently, a 5 Msymbol / sec data rate is employed. A simple calculation shows that if the full 55 MHz – 860 MHz band is used to carry digital signals, the coaxial cable can carry over 5 Gbps (i.e., 134 channels \times 5 Msamples/channel \times 8 bits/sample for 256-QAM). This is shared by all the homes on the coaxial bus, which can vary between 50 and 2000 homes.

It is desirable to use fiber-optic access systems, such as FTTH, in distribution architectures, because the bandwidth of fiber-optic links is much greater than coaxial cable. However, it can be expensive to provide fiber-optic links capable of maintaining the necessary SNR for conventional CATV modulation formats, such as QAM and AM-VSB. A low-noise optical link employing a spectrally efficient modulation format generally requires that the link be operated with a high-power receiver. Also, higher SNR requirements imply a lower tolerance for impairments in optical links caused by optical fiber non-linearity. These two conditions (i.e., more power at the receiver and low tolerance for optical fiber non-linearity) reduce the maximum span length between optical amplifiers, which increases system costs. Therefore, a need exists to provide a distribution system employing fiber-optic access systems using a robust modulation format for downstream transmission of information and having a relatively inexpensive cost of implementation. Additionally, conventional customer premises equipment (CPE), such as a television set, set-top box, cable modem, digital/analogue telephone, set-top Internet access device, personal digital assistant and any device configured to receive signals via a CATV infrastructure maybe configured to receive information in conventional CATV modulation formats (e.g., AM-VSB and QAM). Therefore, a need

exists to provide a distribution system employing fiber-optic access systems that supports conventional CATV modulation formats.

2. Prior Art

Woodward et al. discusses in a 1996 IEEE publication entitled "A Passive-Optical Network Employing Upconverted 16-CAP Signals" that an FTTC PON employing a 16-CAP modulation format transmits information downstream to optical network units (ONUs) in close proximity to users' homes. However, Woodward et al. does not disclose converting signals in a 16-CAP format to a modulation format compatible with CPE.

Wilson et al. discusses in a publication entitled "Reduction Of Optical-Beat Interference (OBI) in Cable-Modem/FTTH Systems Using Burst-Mode Lasers" that a FTTH architecture transmits information downstream using a 64-QAM modulation format. However, transmitting information downstream over a fiber-optic link using 64-QAM generally requires high power at the receiver and a low tolerance for impairments in optical links. These two conditions (i.e., more power at the receiver and low tolerance for fiber non-linearity) reduce the maximum span length between optical amplifiers, which increases system costs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an aspect of the present invention to provide a distribution plant including a fiber-optic access system. It is a further aspect of the present invention to transmit information downstream on the distribution plant using a robust modulation format. It is an even further aspect of the present invention to provide a distribution system capable of providing information in a modulation format compatible with conventional CPE.

In accordance with the aspects of the present invention, a distribution plant employing a FIBER-OPTIC ACCESS SYSTEM, such as FTTH, maybe provided. The FTTH plant shares a head-end with a conventional HFC plant. Additionally, quadrature phase shift key (QPSK) modulation format is used to transmit information downstream to users' premises. Also, signals transmitted on the distribution plant employing the fiber-optic access system are transmitted at the same bit rate per RF channel as media signals transmitted on the hybrid-fiber coaxial distribution plant. Therefore, equipment developed for HFC systems may easily be converted to a FTTH or other fiber-optic

access system application. Additionally, as discussed above, conventionally QAM is used to transmit digital information downstream in an HFC plant. However, QAM requires a high SNR for transmission over fiber-optic links. Therefore, it is advantageous to use QPSK to transmit information downstream on the FTTH plant, because QPSK requires a lower SNR than QAM.

Also, in accordance with the aspects of the present invention, a method and apparatus is provided for converting information received via the FTTH plant using a first robust modulation format, such as QPSK, to a modulation format compatible with CPE, such as a QAM format.

Also in accordance with the aspects of the present invention, a user interface apparatus is provided that includes a first adaptor circuit coupled to an optical receiver and operable to select at least one channel from a plurality of channels received via the optical receiver. The first adaptor circuit is connected to in-home wiring within the user premises. In-home wiring can include conventional in-home wiring and local wireless links. Also, a second adaptor circuit is provided that is connected to the in-home wiring and operable to receive signals transmitted on the at least one channel and convert the signals to a format compatible with CPE.

Also in accordance with the aspects of the present invention, a method of converting signals received from a head-end over a distribution plant including fiber-optic links to a format compatible with customer premises equipment is provided. The method comprises steps of receiving the signals in a first format from the head-end in a downstream bandwidth; selecting a channel in the downstream bandwidth carrying some of the received signals; transmitting the signals carried in the selected channel on the selected channel to an adaptor circuit; and converting the signals received on the selected channel to the format compatible with customer premises equipment at the adaptor circuit.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent with reference to the following detailed description and figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the accompanying figures in which like reference numerals indicate similar elements and in which:

5 Fig. 1 is a schematic block-diagram of a system employing the various principles of a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 illustrates spectrums at various points on the system shown in Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a flow-diagram outlining an exemplary process applicable to the preferred embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

10 Fig. 1 is a schematic block-diagram of system 100 employing the principles of a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Headend (HE) 110 is connected to user premises 120 via FTTH plant 130 and is operable to provide multimedia services, such as
15 digital/analogue video and audio, high-speed data, video telephony and the like, to user premises 120. FTTH plant 130 is shown by way of example only and the present invention is not limited to a FTTH plant. Other known fiber-optic access systems, such as FTTC and the like, may be used in lieu of FTTH plant 130. Although not shown, HE 110 can support thousands of users via multiple distribution plants, such as FTTH plant
20 130 and HFC plant 145.

HE 110 includes conventional cable modem termination system (CMTS) 140 connected to HFC plant 145 and FTTH plant 130. CMTS 140 controls upstream and downstream transmission between cable modems coupled to plants 130 and 145 and transmission on wide area networks (WANs) connected, for example, to the Internet.

25 HE 110 includes converter 150, combiner 160 and optical transmitter 165 for converting digital information signals to QPSK format and transmitting the signals to user premises 120 via FTTH 130 in QPSK format. For example, HE 110 may receive digital video signals 155 in a variety of formats from multiple sources, such as a head-end in the sky (HITS) and a high-speed fiber link.

30 HE 110 may receive digital video signals 155 signals from the high-speed fiber link as time-division multiplexed signals. The high-speed fiber link may utilize any

known standard. Frequently, the SONET (synchronous optical network) standard is used by the fiber link. This standard uses on/off keying, and the payload is placed within SONET frames following the SONET standard. Other standards, which can use ON/OFF keying or RF subcarrier transmission, may also be employed by the fiber link for transmitting digital video signals 155 to HE 110. When RF subcarrier transmission is used to transmit digital video signals 155 to HE 110, multiple video programs are modulated by RF carriers. These RF channels typically have a symbol rate of 5-Msymbol/sec, and the typical modulation format is either 256-QAM (so the RF channel has a bit rate of 40 Mbits/sec) or 64-QAM (so the RF channel has a bit rate of 30 Mbits/sec).

For transmission of signals on HFC plant 145, signals received from the SONET link may be converted to QAM and subcarrier-multiplexed for transmission on HFC plant 145.

64-QAM and 256-QAM are not optimal modulation formats for fiber-optic systems, because these modulation formats require a high SNR that is costly to achieve for fiber-optic links. Therefore, within HE 110 the QAM signals may be converted to QPSK format having a 15 or 20 Msymbol/sec data rates by converter 150 (the symbol rate is chosen to maintain the same bit-rate in the QPSK channel as was used in the QAM channel). These signals are combined with QPSK signals from CMTS 140 and other multimedia signals in QPSK format, such as digital video signals from the HITS, by combiner 160. Optical transmitter 165 transmits the output of combiner 160 to multiple user premises via FTTH plant 130.

User premises 120 includes adaptor 170 for selecting a channel and adaptor 175 for converting signals received on the channel to a format usable by coupled CPE.

Optical receiver 180 receives signals from HE 110 via FTTH 130. Adaptor 170, receiving signals from optical receiver 180, includes a band selector for selecting a particular channel for transmission to CPE 190 via in-home wiring 185. For example, bandwidth on FTTH systems is virtually unlimited, and a user may wish to receive signals, such as desired digital video or data, transmitted on a particular channel. The band selector can be used to select a channel or band of channels carrying the desired digital video or data. Therefore, in-home wiring 185 will not need to support the full

bandwidth of the optical signal, and not all of the incoming signal will need to be converted into a CATV format (e.g., 256-QAM). Optical receiver 180 and adaptor 170 may be included in optical network unit 172 connected to or included in user premises 120.

5 CPE 190 (e.g., DOCSIS modem 192 connected to computer 194 or set-top box 196 connected to television 198) may use adaptor 175 to instruct adaptor 170 to select a particular channel having, for example, desired data or desired digital video. For CPE 190, such as set-top box 196, a user input device, such as remote control 177, can be used to select a particular channel. Adaptor 175 may include conventional receiver circuitry
10 (not shown) for receiving channel selection signals from a user input device and conventional transceiver circuitry (not shown) for transmitting a signal indicative of the user-selected channel to adaptor 170.

Adaptor 170 sends signals transmitted on the user-selected channel to adaptor 175. Adaptor 175 includes a converter for converting signals from QPSK to a format
15 (e.g., 256 QAM 5Msymbol/sec) usable by CPE 190. For example, conventional televisions include circuitry for receiving QAM signals for display.

Bandwidth in HFC CATV systems is limited to approximately 1 GHz, but a high SNR can be maintained for QAM signals. In FTTH systems the bandwidth is virtually unlimited, but it is difficult to maintain a high SNR for QAM signals transmitted over
20 fiber. QPSK requires a SNR comparable to OOK (i.e., On-Off Keying; a modulation format used for transmission over fiber), and is therefore a more appropriate modulation format for FTTH systems than the more bandwidth efficient 256-QAM modulation format that is commonly employed in CATV systems.

A 20 Msymbol/sec QPSK channel will have the same bit rate as a 5 Msymbol/sec
25 256-QAM channel. To transmit content over FTTH plant 130, 20 Msymbol QPSK channels spaced between 20 and 24 MHz can be used, rather than the 5 Msymbol/sec 256-QAM channels spaced at 6 MHz that are commonly used in HFC systems. Keeping the same bit-rate per RF channel allows a FTTH system to carry the same content broken into the same channel assignments as a HFC system. This allows equipment developed
30 for HFC to be easily converted to a FTTH application. Adaptor 175 converts the desired

channel from QPSK to 256-QAM, allowing customers to use existing CPE to receive the signals.

Figs. 2b-c show RF spectra at various points in system 100. Fig. 2a illustrates the RF spectrum for conventional HFC plant 145 carrying digital information on QAM subcarriers spaced at 6 MHz. Fig. 2b illustrates the RF spectrum for FTTH plant 130 carrying digital information on QPSK subcarriers spaced at 24 MHz. This spectrum is received by ONU 172 and has a bandwidth that extends to frequencies much higher than the bandwidth of HFC plant 145. Additionally, the RF spectrum for FTTH plant 130 is for a single wavelength, and multiple wavelengths may be used to transmit information over FTTH plant 130.

Fig. 2c illustrates the RF spectrum for transmission between adaptors 170 and 175 over in-home wiring 185. As discussed above, it may be beneficial to select a particular channel or subset of the received QPSK channels received at ONU 172 when the connection (e.g., in-home wiring 185) between ONU 172 and CPE 190 has a limited bandwidth. Multiple channels or multiple bands of RF channels can be selected by adaptor 170, so that multiple televisions (or other CPE) requesting channels in different RF bands can be served.

Fig. 3 illustrates a method employing the principles of the present invention. In step 300, information, such as media signals including one or more of video, audio or data, is converted to QPSK format in HE 110. In step 310, the information is transmitted to user premises 120 via FTTH plant 130. In step 320, adaptor 175 sends a channel selection signal to adaptor 170 indicating a desired RF channel carrying desired media signals (i.e., media signals a user desires to listen to and/or view). The channel selection signal may be adapted from a signal received from a user input device, such as remote control 177, controlled by a user to select the desired channel. In step 330, adaptor 170 sets a band selector to select an RF channel or band of RF channels that include the desired RF channel. In step 335, media signals carried by the band of RF channels are transmitted to adaptor 175 via in-home wiring 185. In step 340, the signals are converted to a format compatible with CPE 190.

In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, adaptor 170 and 175 are incorporated in ONU 172, so that only one RF channel, rather than a band of RF channels, is transmitted to each CPE 190.

5 In still another preferred embodiment of the present invention using wave division multiplexing (WDM), multiple wavelengths can be used to transmit information to users. Employing WDM increases the capacity of FTTH plant 130, because each wavelength can transmit multiple RF channels. For example, multiple RF channels may be subcarrier multiplexed on a single wavelength and multiple wavelengths may be multiplexed on a fiber-optic link. For this embodiment, adaptor 170 located at ONU 172 selects a desired
10 wavelength and chooses the appropriate RF band to transmit information to CPE 190 via in-home wiring 185. Additionally, an optical band selector (not shown) may be used to allow one or more CPE 190 to choose channels carried by different wavelengths. This would be controlled in the same manner as the RF band selector in adaptor 170.

15 When RF channels transmitted via FTTH 130 to user premises 120 fall within the communication bandwidth of in-home wiring 185 (e.g., when the highest frequency channel is within is below approximately 1 GHz, and in-home wiring 185 is coaxial cable) the need for an RF band selector in ONU 172 may be avoided, because all the signals carried by the RF channels can be sent to CPE 190.

20 In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, FTTH plant 130 is replaced with a fiber-to-the-curb infrastructure. For this embodiment, ONU 182 is located outside the home and is connected to the in-home wiring 185 via a drop cable.

25 Additionally, adaptors employing the principles of adaptors 170 and 175 can be used for upstream transmission. Upstream bandwidth in an HFC plant is limited and often cannot provide a high SNR. Therefore, it is desirable to take advantage of the far greater bandwidth provided by a FTTH network. One of ordinary skill in the art would readily recognize that similar adaptors and transmission equipment can be used for upstream transmission in FTTH plant 130. Also, system 100 is not limited to converting digital video signals to QPSK format at HE 110. Other digital and/or analogue
30 information, such as data, analogue video, digital/analogue audio and the like may be converted to QPSK format from other known formats for transmission over FTTH 130.

Instead of QPSK, signals can also be converted to other formats, which are less spectrally efficient than 64-QAM, but do not require a high SNR. For example, RF subcarriers can be ON/OFF keyed to transmit channels from HE 110 to the user. Also, analogue amplitude modulated (AM) signals can be converted to a frequency modulated (FM)

5 format.

What has been described are the preferred embodiments of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that it is possible to embody the invention in specific forms other than those disclosed in the preferred embodiments described above. This may be done without departing from the spirit of the invention,
10 and the preferred embodiments are merely illustrative and should not be considered restrictive in any way. The scope of the invention is given by the appended claims, rather than the preceding description.

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A user interface apparatus for use in one of a hybrid-fiber coaxial cable system and a
2 fiber-optic access system, the apparatus operable to adapt signals received at an
3 optical receiver for distribution within a user premises, the apparatus comprising:
4 a first adaptor circuit coupled to the optical receiver and operable to select at least
5 one channel transmitting signals modulated in a first format, and the first adaptor
6 circuit is connected to wiring within the user premises; and
7 a second adaptor circuit connected to the wiring within the user premises and
8 operable to receive signals transmitted on the at least one channel and convert the
9 signals to a format compatible with customer premises equipment.
- 1 2. The user interface apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first adaptor circuit includes a
2 band selector operable to select the at least one channel from a plurality of available
3 channels.
- 1 3. The user interface apparatus of claim 2, wherein the second adaptor circuit sends
2 signals to the first adaptor circuit indicating the at least one channel for transmitting
3 signals to the second adaptor circuit.
- 1 4. The user interface apparatus of claim 3, wherein the second adaptor circuit receives,
2 from a user input device, signals indicating the at least one channel for transmitting
3 signals to the second adaptor circuit.
- 1 5. The user interface of claim 1, wherein the first modulation format is a QPSK format
2 and the second adaptor circuit is operable to convert signals in QPSK modulation
3 format to a QAM modulation format.
- 1 6. The user interface of claim 1, wherein the signals received from the first adaptor
2 circuit include one or more of digital video signals, digital audio signals and data.

- 1 7. An adaptor apparatus coupled to a user premises and operable to receive media
2 signals transmitted over a distribution plant in a first format, the adaptor circuit
3 comprising:
4 first adaptor circuitry coupled to customer premises equipment and operable to
5 (1) receive signals indicative of a channel selection from a user input device,
6 (2) receive on a channel associated with the channel selection, the media signals in
7 the first format and (3) convert the signals to a second format compatible with the
8 customer premises equipment.
- 1 8. The adaptor apparatus of claim 7, further comprising:
2 second adaptor circuitry coupled to the first adaptor circuitry and operable to receive
3 signals indicative of a channel selection from the first adaptor circuitry and send the
4 media signals in the first format on the selected channel to the first adaptor circuitry.
- 1 9. The adaptor apparatus of claim 8, wherein the first format is a QPSK modulation
2 format and the second format is QAM modulation format.
- 1 10. The adaptor circuit of claim 7, wherein the distribution plant includes a passive
2 optical network and is operable to transmit digital information signals in QPSK
3 format to the user premises.
- 1 11. A method of converting signals received from a head-end over a distribution plant
2 including at least one fiber-optic link to a format compatible with customer premises
3 equipment comprising:
4 receiving the signals in a first format from the head-end in a downstream bandwidth;
5 selecting at least one channel in the downstream bandwidth carrying some of the
6 received signals;
7 transmitting the signals carried in the selected at least one channel on the selected at
8 least one channel to an adaptor circuit; and
9 converting the signals received on the selected at least one channel to the format
10 compatible with customer premises equipment at the adaptor circuit.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of selecting at least one channel comprises
2 steps of:
3 receiving a signal indicative of a desired channel from a user input device; and
4 sending a signal to a band selector instructing the band selector to select one or more
5 channels that include the desired channel.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of converting the signals comprises a step
2 of converting the signals from a QPSK modulation format to a QAM modulation
3 format.

1 14. A cable television system including a head-end transmitting media signals to a
2 plurality of users via a plurality of distribution plants comprising:
3 a hybrid-fiber coaxial distribution plant connected to the head-end;
4 fiber-optic access system connected to the head-end; wherein media signals
5 transmitted on the fiber-optic access system are transmitted at the same bit rate per
6 radio frequency channel as media signals transmitted on the hybrid-fiber coaxial
7 distribution plant.

1 15. The cable television system of claim 14, wherein the media signals transmitted on the
2 hybrid-fiber coaxial distribution plant are transmitted on radio frequency channels
3 spaced at approximately 6 MHz and transmitted at a data rate of approximately 5
4 Msymbol per sec; and the radio frequency channels include one of 256-QAM
5 channels and 64-QAM channels.

1 16. The cable television system of claim 15, wherein the media signals transmitted on the
2 fiber-optic access system are transmitted on 20 Msymbol per sec QPSK channels
3 spaced approximately between 20 and 24 MHz.

1 17. The cable television system of claim 15, wherein the fiber-optic access systems
2 include one of fiber-to-the-curb and fiber-to-the-home distribution plants.

1 18. The cable television system of claim 14, wherein the media signals transmitted on the
2 hybrid-fiber coaxial distribution plant are modulated using a format that requires less
3 spacing between radio frequency channels than the modulation format used for the
4 media signals transmitted on the fiber-optic access system.

ABSTRACT

A system is provided for combining conventional HFC plants with fiber-optic access systems (e.g., fiber-to-the-home or fiber-to-the-curb) that share a head-end and other equipment. A robust modulation format, such as QPSK, having a sufficient SNR to transmit information (e.g., data, digital audio and digital video) downstream to users' premises via a fiber-optic access system is used. Also, a method and apparatus is provided for converting a first modulation format for information received via a fiber-optic access system to a modulation format compatible with customer premises equipment.

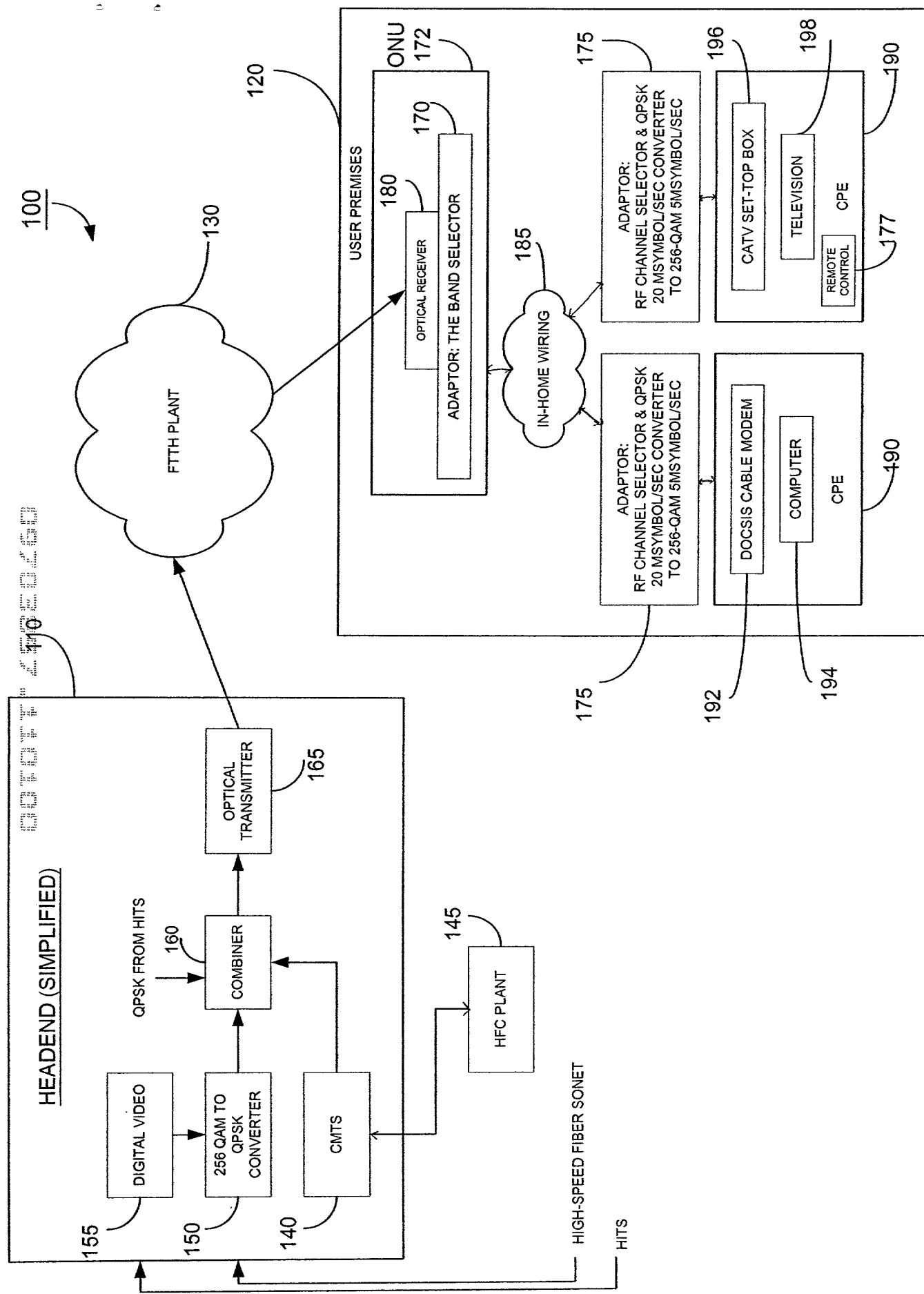


FIG. 1

RF spectrum for HFC plant carrying digital information on QAM subcarriers spaced at 6 MHz

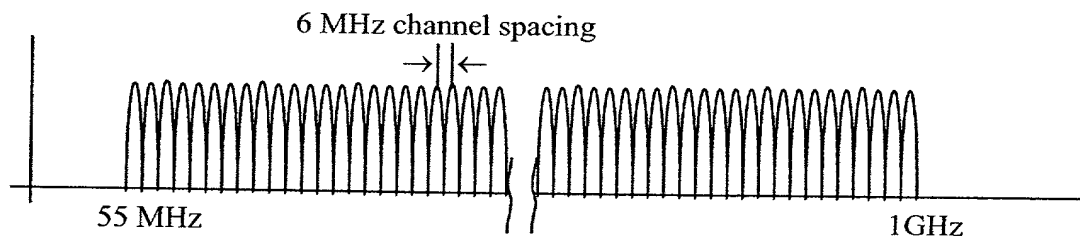


Fig. 2A

RF spectrum for FTTH plant carrying digital information on QPSK subcarriers spaced at 24 MHz

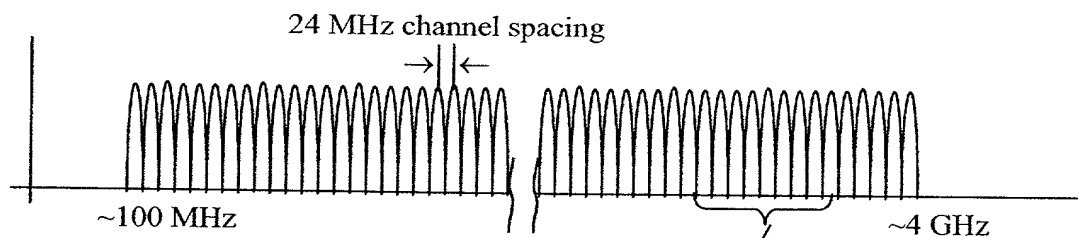


Fig. 2B

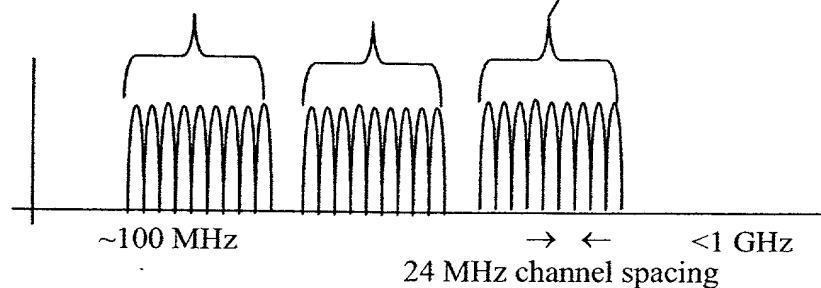


Fig. 2C

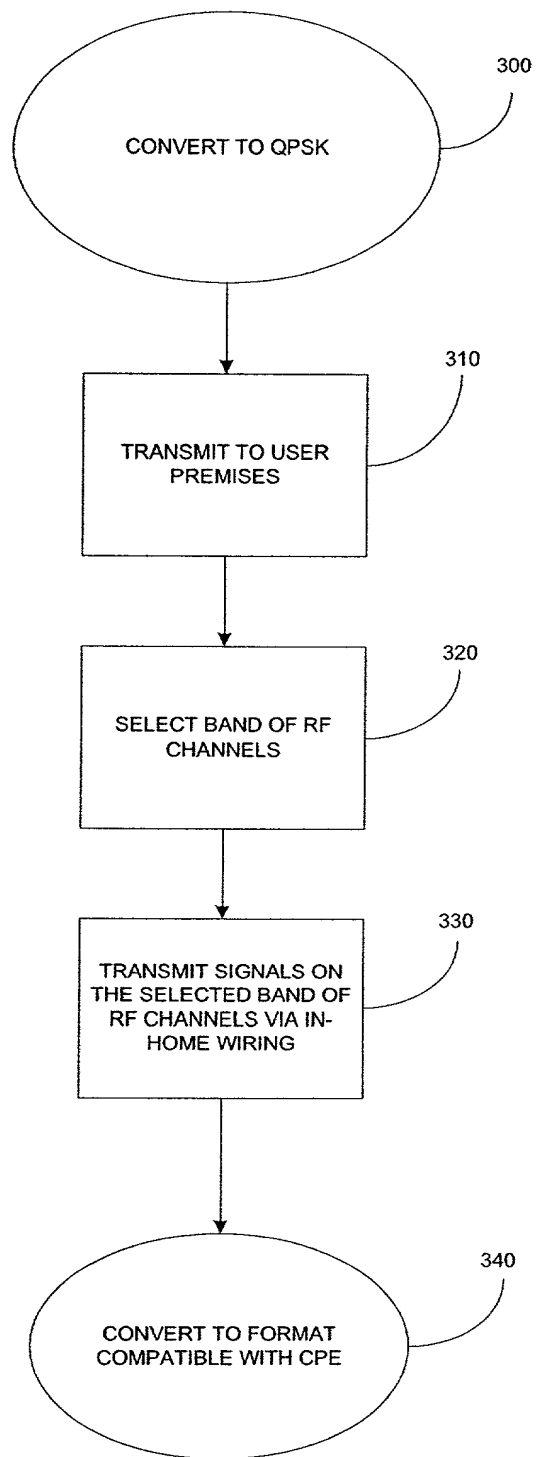


FIG. 3

DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration Submitted with Initial Filing OR <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration submitted after Initial Filing	Attorney Docket Number	2000-0072
	First Named Inventor	Sheryl Leigh Woodward
	COMPLETE IF KNOWN	
	Application Number	
	Filing Date	
	Group Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.
 I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

A Fiber-Optic Access Network Utilizing CATV Technology In An Efficient Manner

(Title of Invention)

the specification of which

☒ is attached hereto

OR

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application Number or PCT International
 Application Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code § 119 (a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of an application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application Number(s)	Country	Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Priority Not Claimed	Certified Copy Attached?	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	NO
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto

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Application Number(s)	Filing Date(MM/DD/YYYY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto

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DECLARATION - Utility or Design Patent Application

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

U.S. Parent Application or PCT Parent Number	Parent Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Parent Patent Number (if applicable)

☐ Additional U.S. or PCT International application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.

As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following registered practitioner(s) with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application, to make alterations and amendments therein, to receive the patent, and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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DWORETSKY, Samuel H.	27873	GARG, Rohini K	45272
ISAACSON, Thomas M.	44166	LEE, Benjamin S.	42787
LEVY, Robert B.	28234	MCGAHAN, Susan E.	35948
MONKA, Gary H.	35290	NAVON, Jeffrey M	32711

☒ I also appoint the following additional registered practitioner(s) named on the Registered Practitioner Information (Supplemental Sheet) (PTO/SB/02C modified by AT&T Corp.) attached hereto with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application, to make alterations and amendments therein, to receive the patent, and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

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COUNTRY	United States of America			FAX	732-368-6932

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Name of Sole or First Inventor		<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor	
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Signature	<i>Sheryl Leigh Woodward</i>	Date	Oct 23, 2001
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Zip Code	07733		

☐ Additional Inventors are being named on the separately numbered sheets attached hereto

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DECLARATION		Registered Practitioner Information (Supplemental Sheet)	
Name	Registration Number	Name	Registration Number
RESTAINO, Thomas A.	33444	STEINMETZ, Alfred G.	22971

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